Twelve Live-Wire Questions *in* Religious Dynamics

CHRISTIAN H. SHIRK

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Twelve Live-Wire Questions in Religious Dynamics

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By
CHRISTIAN H. SHIRK, Ph.D., D.D.

Introduction by
Prof. GEORGE GAILEY CHAMBERS, Ph. D.,
University of Pennsylvania

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Introduction

CHRISTIANITY has been an inherently dynamic religion for nearly nineteen hundred years. Its essential, fundamental facts and principles are few, but those few are full of force. Dr. Shirk has wisely chosen the word " dynamic " in describing the series of questions discussed in this little book. Also the same word may very properly be used to describe his treatment of those questions. Moreover he has covered the essential fundamental facts of Christianity.

The book can easily be read at one sitting, but probably the better plan would be to read a chapter a day. I must confess, however, that I found it difficult to stop reading one chapter after another, and I stopped only because the time had come when I had to go to one of my classes.

Every real Christian should be loaded with ammunition with which to meet agnostics and skeptics, and to show up the fallacies of their arguments. Dr. Shirk has provided a good supply of such ammunition in a virile, concise,

and yet clear-cut form. The book will be especially helpful to the man or woman who has occasion to discuss religious questions from the open public forum.

GEO. GAILEY CHAMBERS.
University of Pennsylvania,
Philadelphia, Penna.

Preface

THE contents of this volume were not originally intended for publication in book form. The substance of the material thus compiled was first presented to student groups at the University of Pennsylvania, under the auspices of the College Y. M. C. A.

Upon the recommendation of Dean Frank P. Graves of the Department of Education of the University of Pennsylvania, and recently appointed Commissioner of Education of the State of New York, and Chancellor of The University of New York, the writer was requested to deliver a series of lectures to be followed by an open forum at the Central Y. M. C. A. of Philadelphia, as a feature of their School of Religious Education program for the season of 1920 and 1921.

The desire of Mr. William O. Easton, Secretary of Religious Education of the Philadelphia Y. M. C. A., was that a series of discussions should be conducted, setting forth the dynamic influence of Christianity. The chap-

ters of this book are intended to show some of the ways in which the religion of Jesus Christ has strongly influenced human life, thought, and progress.

To those who heard the lectures, many of whom spoke words of cordial appreciation, and to those who may chance to read them on the pages of this book, this volume is prayerfully dedicated.

C. H. S.

Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal Church,
Philadelphia, Pa.

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I

DOES IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE WHETHER OR NOT WE BELIEVE IN GOD?

THERE are those who seemingly regard belief in God as a harmless diversion, and of little practical consequence. To them it is but the relic of a superstitious primitive belief which will be outgrown by the world's advanced culture. Others regard it as enslaving and pernicious, for such a belief restrains people from violent revolutionary uprisings, by means of which they can cast off their oppressors. They desire liberty. Their cry is, "Down with all autocrats!" And in their break for liberty they desire freedom from an imaginary Supreme Ruler, whom they regard as responsible for so much of the world's oppression, and so largely the ally of the capitalist. Then there are those who regard belief in God as fundamental to the orderly conduct of human affairs, and the prime requisite in the development of our civilization. They rec-

ognize this belief as the strongest social dynamic in existence.

In speaking of God we refer to the Supreme Being thus designated by the Scriptures. He is regarded as omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. He is declared to be good, loving and wise. He approves righteousness, and condemns sin. The claim is that He created all things, and energizes, and directs this universe; that He is the self-existent, uncreated, eternal Being. As such He is worshipped by millions of people.

The question is, Does it make any difference if we believe in God, or do not believe in Him? The answer is an affirmative one. It makes a world of difference. Belief affects life most potently.

It makes a difference intellectually. We cannot successfully account for the universe on any other hypothesis. Our universe is rationally constructed. To produce it, required a great Thinker. By believing in God, we have a good working hypothesis with which to account for its existence. The best that the unbeliever can say is, that it just happened that way. On discovering a Ford car, it is much more easy to conclude that Henry Ford exists, and is responsible for the car, than to say that certain materials just happened to assemble

themselves that way. So it is with the universe; it is more easy to conclude that God created than that blind force produced. A skeptic might say that he has most thoroughly analyzed a Ford car, but was not able to discover Henry Ford. That is not surprising. No one expected that he would. Some, however, by similar methods come to the conclusion that God does not exist.

Robert Ingersol and Henry Ward Beecher were good friends. One time when visiting Mr. Beecher, Mr. Ingersol was shown a device illustrating the movements of the planets and satellites of the solar system. Mr. Ingersol greatly admired this fine piece of mechanism and said, "Mr. Beecher, who made that?" Mr. Beecher replied, "Oh! No one made it; it just happened that way." Mr. Ingersol admitted the force of his reply. It required a God to devise and construct this great universe. Without God we do not know from whence we came, why we are here, or whither we are going. Such lack of knowledge produces a very uncomfortable feeling. No one would like to be on a ship piloted by blind force. Voyagers feel better satisfied with a benevolent and wise pilot at the wheel, steering toward a satisfactory destination.

Our education consists in research work,

thinking God's thoughts after Him. True education leads to the conclusion of God's existence, rather than to a denial of Him. The religion of Jehovah has furnished this world with its strongest intellectual stimulus. Where there is no knowledge of Him, people are largely ignorant and superstitious. Western learning, which is a great by-product of Christianity, readily maintains its supremacy in the world's culture. Knowing God's truth furnishes freedom to the human mind.

Belief in God makes a great difference morally. Thinking of God as holy, loving, and beneficent, places Him before us as a model for our imitation. It has been observed that the inhabitants of this world have a tendency to become like the gods they serve. If their deities are dishonest, immoral, or murderous, their devotees will rise no higher in the moral scale than their objects of worship.

Believing that God exists, His revealed word is readily accepted. That emphasizes righteous living, and teaches that sin leads to suffering. The believer discovers that it requires goodness to win the approval of his God. This supplies him with a potent moral uplift. Truly believing in God implies accepting Him as a model, and tending to become like Him in character.

Justice Brewer of the United States Supreme Court said a few years ago, before a body of Yale students, that crime increases to the extent that the pulpit is silent in declaring the judgments of God against sin.

A certain atheist was entertaining friends at dinner one day. They were in sympathy with his views, and engaged in a discussion of them while at dinner. Their host asked them to refrain from any atheistic assertions in the presence of his servants. When in surprise they asked him why he made this request, he replied that his life would not be safe in that house if they no longer believed in a God that punishes sin.

In order to prepare the way for the German atrocities in Belgium and France, the leaders of German thought had to abandon their faith in the Christian God, and endeavoured to lead their people to do likewise.

The Bolshevism of Russia and other lands could not exist without a renunciation of faith in God. They embrace atheism, and teach it. They desire license to follow the promptings of an unregenerate heart. It claims to be altruistic, but is perhaps the world's worst species of selfishness. Jehovah, through His revealed will, seriously interferes with their licentious abandon. Hence He must be dethroned with

other kings. With Him removed, sin likewise no longer exists; for sin is a transgression of the law of God. With no God, all restraint is cast off.

It is impossible to maintain orderly civil government in the world if God is dethroned. Eternal justice is grounded in a righteous God. Without the influence of faith in God, men will retrograde to the level of beasts, and in many respects to a much lower level.

Belief in God makes a difference religiously. If God exists, we can enter into spiritual fellowship with Him. We are created in His image and can have intelligent communion with Him. Knowing Him to be a loving Father, we can draw nigh unto Him in spiritual fellowship. We discover His love to be redeeming love. Just as a lover delights to fulfill the desires of the one loved, so does the believer aim to please his God. He is controlled in his conduct by the love of God. It constrains him to do God's bidding.

Man is a religious animal. He has the God intuition. He has the capacity for discerning God. Helen Keller, the deaf and blind girl, when for the first time being told about God, by Bishop Brooks, said, "I have always known Him, only I did not know what to name Him."

We cannot scientifically prove God. He is thus undemonstrable. He can be perceived by faith. We can say with Tennyson:

"Strong Son of God, immortal love,
Whom we that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove."

Lack of faith makes it impossible to realize God. Faith is the spiritual medium by means of which we can know God. Those who have a vital faith are pure in heart, and hence have the capacity of perceiving God. The believer readily takes Tennyson's advice:

"Speak to Him thou, for He hears thee,
And spirit with Spirit can meet;
Closer is He than breathing,
And nearer than hands or feet."

God does certain things for those who believe in Him that He cannot do for others. He furnishes them with His salvation, and answers all of their properly conditioned prayers.

Those who love the law of God find that they obtain great peace thereby. Many will testify that they find great comfort in their Christian faith while meeting with life's varied experiences.

The believer in Jehovah possesses a well-grounded optimism. He is certain that he is a participant in a triumphant cause. According to Biblical teaching, it will also make a great difference in the next world if we have properly related ourselves to God in this one.

Only he who will exercise a vital faith can obtain the benefits thereof. Sam Jones illustrates this in a homely way. He tells the story of how he saw a contrivance in a western state by means of which steers could water themselves. By stepping upon a platform in front of a trough, a hydrant would be opened, filling the trough. He said he could imagine some skeptical steer looking at that device, and saying, "I don't take any stock in that thing. I can't see any water in that trough." And thus would fail to slake his thirst. A much simpler minded steer might come along, and say, "Here is a watering trough, I will go up to it, and drink." And, stepping upon the platform by faith, he obtains a refreshing draught. Skepticism has prevented many from obtaining a realization of God in the soul.

Those who believe in God, and draw nigh unto Him by faith, discover the reality of the great and good Spirit. Those who fail in this, deprive their souls of their deepest satisfaction, and only true life.

It made a big difference with Thomas Carlyle when all of a sudden he was led to exclaim, "I believe in God!" He had no God before. His earlier writings were depressingly pessimistic. After that, a splendid optimism characterized his writings. It makes a difference if we live in God's world, or in a godless world.

When God spake to Moses out of the burning bush, He told him to take off his sandals, for he is standing upon holy ground. If Moses had not in reverence removed his shoes, and drawn near by faith, he never would have discovered who "I AM," the self-existent one, is. It is only those who remove the sandals of sin and unbelief that get a satisfactory revelation of God unto their souls.

Has this picture been painted in colours too rich? A certain person viewed the paintings of a famous artist, and offered to criticise them. He said to the artist, "I have never been able to see such rich colours in nature as you have put into that sunset scene." The artist who could see things with a trained eye, and had the ability of vision, sympathetically replied, "Don't you wish you could?" To such as are not able, because of unbelief, to see God, we can fittingly and sympathetically say, "Don't you wish you could?"

II

IS THE BIBLE ALSO A MERE SCRAP OF PAPER?

THE ex-kaiser of Germany and his associates in power advised the British nation to regard a solemn treaty with Belgium as a mere scrap of paper. They themselves dealt with international law in that fashion. Sacred covenants between men are often regarded as mere scraps of paper.

Much of the world's literature has but a passing value. It interests people to-day, and to-morrow something else is required to command their attention. Scientific books become antiquated in a few years' time.

Is the Bible a mere bit of worthless paper, and does it take its place with the world's passing literature? The question must be answered negatively. The Bible is possessed of a dynamic element that makes it a book absolutely unique when you seek to classify it.

The Bible has high literary merit. It deals with the loftiest themes in a masterly style. It has been the source of literary inspiration to

many of the world's great writers. Many Biblical quotations are found in the writings of Shakespeare. Tennyson, Browning and Whittier were exponents of Biblical truth. John Ruskin declared that he owes his fine literary style to the fact that his mother read to him from the Bible when he was a mere lad, reading the entire Bible to him again and again.

It has great endurance. Many have sought to treat it as a mere scrap of paper from the days of Jehoiakim to the present time. It has been hated on account of interfering with the selfish lusts of men. They have sought to undermine and overthrow it. No book has ever been subjected to the acid test as has the Bible. It has been pronounced antiquated, and dead, again and again. Eloquent funeral orations have repeatedly been delivered over its supposedly lifeless remains, but it is still here. It is studied as never before. An increasing number of copies are turned out by printing-presses from year to year. Among books it is the best seller of the day.

Voltaire said, "It took twelve men to establish Christianity. I will show you that it will take but one man to destroy it." After his death the very room in which he wrote those words became the property of the British and

Foreign Bible Society, and was stacked from floor to ceiling with copies of the Holy Scriptures. It will endure as long as time lasts, and supply our human needs. The Bible of tomorrow will not be choice selections of the world's best literature, combined in a single volume, as some have predicted. It will be nothing other than the time-honoured Hebrew, and New Testament Scriptures.

The Bible is clearly of divine origin. It was written by human agents, but they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The proof of its divine origin is, it reveals God. Its supreme revelation is contained in Jesus Christ. He is the central figure of the book. It is not a unitary book, as far as human authorship is concerned. There were at least thirty-six writers who wrote throughout a period of sixteen centuries. It is a sacred library of sixty-six books. But they are unitary in purpose, and in divine inspiration. All seek to make men righteous, and bring them into fellowship with God.

Many miracles are recorded in the Scriptures, but the greatest miracle of all is, the way righteousness is exalted in it. The leading proof of its inspiration is the fact that it inspires those who reverently study it.

The Bible is possessed of great power.

There is a power in literature. This was well exemplified in the war literature that was issued to put through the various drives. Volunteers came forward, money was offered, and lives were freely given in response to the appeals of our war literature. Propagandas of all kinds are carried on through the means of tract literature. Our newspapers are a mighty force in the thought life of to-day. But no other literature has so gripped the hearts of men and led them forth to deeds of greatest heroism and sacrifice as has the Bible.

It is the only influence of true worth, in the world's literature, in the process of character building. It is the blue-print for that kind of construction.

The Bible has exerted a wide influence in the world. It has furnished Christian nurture for childhood. It has liberated womanhood. It has abolished slavery. It is seeking to abolish war. It is exterminating intemperance. It contains the only remedy for the world's economic ills. It is responsible for the world's democracy. It has wonderfully influenced the world's literature. It has given it its highest art and best music. Unbelief cannot produce real art, poetry, or music.

It furnishes salvation to men. Millions have believed its sacred promises, and discovered

them to be bed rock. The Bible has transformed the lives of countless multitudes. It declares our origin, the purpose of our existence, and reveals our destiny.

Heathenism with its accompanying immorality prevails wherever the Scriptures are unknown. Missionaries have gone with their Bibles into heathen lands and transformed them. Charles Darwin was astonished at what was done in a comparatively short time by missionaries among the natives of Patagonia. He had seen the natives before, and then again after their Christianization. He did not believe that such a transformation could be effected in less than a few centuries. He became a liberal contributor to the mission cause thereafter.

In pioneer days, here in America, circuit riders came into settlements and transformed them. The only instrument they used was the word of God. In their hands it was indeed quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. The best apologetic for the Bible is its effect upon the believer's life.

It is the sword of the Spirit to the tempted man. Jesus wielded it in His temptation with telling effect. The person who hides God's word in his heart will, with the Psalmist, find it a safeguard against sin. It affords a conso-

lation in sorrow and distress as no other book does. Many a dead soldier was found in the recent war with his pocket Testament held tightly in his death grip. It is said that when Sir Walter Scott lay dying he asked his son-in-law to read to him. He wished to know from what book he was to read. Scott replied, "There is but one book." The Bible is not merely a book, it is *the* book. Those who have influenced this world most for good were all devout Bible students.

The Bible makes its appeal to all classes from the most unlettered to the profoundest thinkers. It makes its appeal to all races. It is a book for all ages. It is the chart and compass to guide to the Celestial City. Without it men are lost in the darkness of this world's desolation. It cleanses by its purifying stream. It quenches the soul's thirst, and feeds it with heavenly bread. Those who taste it find it "sweeter than honey or the honeycomb."

Many have failed to discover the charm and worth of this book. They are prejudiced against it, and hence fail to obtain a true appreciation of it. When General Lew Wallace undertook to write "Ben Hur," he was a skeptic. It was necessary for him to study such literature as would get him acquainted with oriental life. So as to portray the character of

Jesus he had to study most carefully the New Testament. The result was that he was captivated by the book, and lost his skepticism. He devoted the remainder of his life to earnest Christian service. The word of God is truly, "Quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." It would be impossible to compute the full extent to which the Bible has influenced human life, and directed the course of the world's history.

"Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then, looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"'How many anvils have you had,' said I,
'To wear and batter all these hammers so?'
'Just one,' said he, and then with twinkling eye,
'The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.'

"'And so,' I thought, 'the Anvil of God's Word
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon,
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The Anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone.'"

III

WAS JESUS AN IMPRACTICAL IDEALIST?

JESUS went up into a mountain to announce some of the fundamental laws of His Kingdom, generally known as The Sermon on the Mount. His teaching was mountain top in character. His disciples could come up to Him to hear His message. Could they come up to Him in practicing what He taught? Did Jesus teach a morality that was unattainable; or if attainable, would not be of practical worth? A certain minister was introduced to a man as Dr. Blank. The man asked him where he practices medicine. The preacher replied that he does not practice, he preaches. The impression seems to be on the part of many that the ethical teachings of Jesus furnish good subject matter for preaching, but are too idealistic for practical purposes.

Let us review some of the things He taught. He declared that the poor in spirit, the meek, merciful, peacemakers, pure in heart, those hungering and thirsting after righteousness,

and those persecuted for righteousness' sake are in a blessedly happy condition. These are the ones that measure up to the requirements of His Kingdom. He taught that if you are smitten on one cheek to turn the other also. He said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use you, and persecute you." "All things that ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." He declared that it is more needful to keep the inner life right than merely to observe certain outward proprieties. In gratifying one's ambition to be great, he should seek to be a minister and servant unto others. In order to meet with largest success one should seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. He asked people to be as perfect as God the Father is perfect. By selfishly saving our life we lose it, and gain it by unselfishly devoting it to the good of our fellowmen.

He entered upon the task of winning men unto Himself, who would put these principles into practice. Thus He purposed to establish an inner kingdom of righteousness among men.

In His final judgment scene, He showed that those who feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and give a cup of cold water in a Christian spirit, will obtain the

divine approval. He strongly emphasized the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man as the foundation of His Kingdom. He asked people to forsake all, and deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow Him. He Himself was an embodiment of His teaching, and He asked others to imitate Him.

The question is, Are His idealistic teachings practical? Some of the recent German writers declared His teachings in the Sermon on the Mount as being the utterances of a weakling, and utterly a failure in practical life. Instead of the meek inheriting the earth, the haughty do so. Peacemakers are the enemies of society, they declared. War makers are the ones who advance the world, and produce a strong race. They urged seeking happiness in persecuting, rather than in being persecuted for righteousness' sake. Their nation tried this selfish scheme. They succeeded in proving at least one Scripture passage, which tells us that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. In their pride as supermen they did not inherit the earth. They lost territory, and impoverished themselves. They denounced mercy as a thing that hinders progress, and that the strong will neither show nor request. They finally, however, begged for it in utter disgrace. Instead of war bring-

ing to them physical strength, it destroyed most of their able-bodied men, and created conditions which are resulting in physical deterioration.

Some years ago, Mr. Wu Ting Fang, the prominent Chinese statesman, addressed an audience in New York City. He compared Christianity with Confucianism. He approved of the golden rule, calling attention to Confucius having stated it in negative form. But he regarded Jesus' request to love our enemies as a very difficult and impractical one. And to turn the other cheek when smitten on the one, he regarded as "meekness with a vengeance." But the United States returned the indemnity to China, thus returning good for evil, and China became the firm friend of America.

In Russia, the Bolshevists have trampled morality under foot, and have brought a curse upon their land. They would not follow the golden rule policy in government administration.

It seems to take this world a long time to find out the practical worth of righteousness. The truly great men of this world have not become great at the expense of others, but rather through serving others. The wolf, hyena, and lion are disappearing, while the

lamb is still here more largely than ever. The warlike ones are bound to perish by the sword, while the meek inherit the earth.

The question has often been asked, Can you succeed in business on the golden rule principle? Many believe that it cannot be done, and refuse to embrace Christianity, believing that they would meet with failure if they attempted it.

All of the economic unrest of the world is due to the fact that men are not ready to do business according to the teaching of Jesus. As nations cannot prosper by seeking to destroy each other, so individuals cannot enjoy true prosperity by seeking to devour each other. Coöperation is a Christian virtue. All can get along better by mutual helpfulness than by selfish rivalry. Those corporations that take their employees into friendly partnership, and see to it that they are properly compensated, are on the most sound footing to-day.

In helping the weak, the strong become stronger. The Good Samaritan was the man with the big and happy soul, and not the priest, or the Levite. The man who, on a frigid day, found another who was freezing to death in a blizzard, and who at once busied himself in rubbing his unfortunate fellow-

traveller with snow, developed a warmth within himself that saved his own life as well as that of another. That is the teaching of Jesus, that we gain our life by expending it in the service of our fellowmen. To serve God we must serve our brothers.

Millions of lives and money have been expended on war. Sorrows untold have thus been caused. If Jesus' teaching were observed there would be an end of war. We would have a league of nations that would be more than a mere scrap of paper.

Jesus was not an idle dreamer. He is infinitely the world's most practical philosopher. The only ethics worthy of the name, ever propounded among men, is Christian ethics.

This world has conducted its affairs so largely on a selfish basis. Both John the Baptist and Jesus declared that repentance is needed to enter the Kingdom that has come nigh. To enter the Kingdom of Jesus and promote it, requires a crucifixion of one's selfish nature. It is needful to be controlled by the love of God as applied by the Holy Spirit. It is not enough to know the teachings of Jesus to practice them. It takes regenerated men to prove their practicability. If we sit at the feet of the Master as did the disciples when He taught them, and then wait with them in the

upper room for the enduement of power, we will find that the whole Christian scheme is a most practical one. After the day of Pentecost it became most natural for them to break bread with each other, and to minister to each other's wants.

Many have attempted to invent improved religions, but have utterly failed. The religion of Jesus is the one intended for the human heart, and to promote the right social relationship. Only that can bring true happiness and peace. The gates of a new life for this world can be opened only by the hand of Him about whom Robert Browning wrote in Saul:

"'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for!
my flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O
Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a
Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever; a
Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to
thee! See the Christ stand!"

IV

HOW DID DEMOCRACY COME TO BE?

THE ancient forms of government were almost exclusively autocratic and oppressive. A few minor experiments in democracy were made in ancient Greece and Rome. The first experiment in modern democracy was made by Switzerland. This was followed by the Dutch Republic. The Pilgrim fathers, who were lovers of liberty, sojourned for a while in Holland before coming to Massachusetts. It was there that their vision and appreciation of liberty were enlarged. They brought with them the seeds of liberty to their new home. The outcome was, American freedom. Later, France threw aside its yoke of oppression, and joined the ranks of free countries. Britain modified its government in such a way as virtually to become a republic. China, tiring of her ancient system of tyranny, had her revolution, and established herself as a democracy. All American countries south of the United States

patterned their government after that of the land of Washington and Lincoln. Cuba was providentially added to this list.

Russia suddenly dethroned its Czar and became a republic. As an outcome of the war imperial Germany was added to the list of free nations. Those countries of Europe that still maintain the monarchical form of government are limited monarchies, and limited monarchies are in reality democracies.

Democracy did not only affect civil government in the middle ages, but it began to assert itself in matters ecclesiastical as well. The great Protestant Reformation was a world movement in the direction of democracy. The position of laymen in modern church government is an outgrowth of this democratizing tendency.

What has been the dynamic influence which promoted democracy?

To obtain our answer, we must go back to the founder of Christianity, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the originator of world freedom. He came to set at liberty the captives. He taught certain truths which have exerted an untold influence upon the minds of men and guided them to their freedom.

Jesus taught that God is the Father of the human race, and that all men are brethren.

Brothers are not expected to exercise lordship over each other, and enslave each other. They are supposed to have equal rights. He enunciated the golden rule, which would prevent any man from oppressing his brother man. He taught that great men are those who minister unto others, and not those who exercise lordship over others. Jesus was the great champion of the divine rights of all men. He never intimated that the masses are good only for exploitation and cannon fodder. Each individual has infinite value in His estimation. Christianity struck a death blow at the caste system when it taught each to consider the other better than himself.

Popular education, one of the great by-products of Christianity, has proven itself to be a foe of oppression, and a friend of democracy. Ignorance has enabled tyranny to flourish. Tyrants have always sought to keep their subjects in ignorance, and under the sway of superstition. The doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings cannot long be maintained after people become enlightened. The nation that has its education unfettered, and supports its educational institutions best, is the freest nation. Nothing has so unfettered the mind as the religion of Jesus Christ. It has developed the world's best education.

Christianity ever does:

"Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws."

Humanity is possessed of an innate love of freedom. The Christian teaching makes its appeal to this deep-seated instinct, and helps men to realize their coveted desire.

In this series of discussions the effort is made to show how the Christian religion has exerted a potent influence in the world. We therefore notice that it has very radically influenced civil government.

Politically, people are most free when they govern themselves. The word democracy is composed of two Greek words, damos—people, and kratos—power, meaning, therefore, the power of the people to rule. Jesus Christ is the one person who is capable of bringing people to the realization of their just rights. He has most truly been called "The World's Supreme Democrat." He was a man among men. The common people heard Him gladly. He was a friend of the outcast, and ate with the publicans and sinners. He, however, also fraternized with Nicodemus, the rich young man, and Simon the Pharisee.

Democracy does not imply the rule of any

one exclusive class, even if that class be the so-called common people. It implies the rule of all the people, in which the rights of all classes are safeguarded. A Soviet form of government could qualify as a true democracy only when all social groups in it are given a just representation.

The best fruits of democracy can be had only when a country is truly Christian. A government "of the people, by the people, and for the people" cannot exceed the moral standards of those who constitute the government.

The chief work of Jesus is not that of bringing to men their civil freedom, but to redeem them from the slavery of sin. He Himself is the truth, and men knowing that truth are made free. The higher freedom is spiritual freedom from error and sin.

"Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.
Minds innocent and quiet take that for an hermitage.
If I have freedom in my love, and in my soul am free,
Angels alone which soar above, enjoy such liberty."

Jesus declared a truth implying much when He said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

V

DOES IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE WHETHER OR NOT WE BELIEVE IN A FUTURE LIFE?

BY a future life we mean that death affects only the physical body; and the soul, being immortal, lives beyond the grave. Christian belief in a future life is based more upon revelation than scientific evidence, or philosophic reason. Hence we must depend mainly upon Bible teaching for our more definite conceptions of immortality.

Our belief in a future life makes a difference intellectually. We are all desirous to know why we are placed in this world. If we are placed here to live, at the most only a few score of years, and then to be no more, life in most instances would not be worth living. If there is a great future before us, and a great purpose in our life, then the riddle of our existence is solved. We have the instinct of immortality, and Christian faith gratifies this instinctive desire to live on, and in a better world than this.

It is no strain upon rational thinking to believe in our immortality. It is less wonderful that we should in a living way survive death than that we should live at all. A process of life that can take inanimate material, and transmute it into living tissue, may well have in it a provision for the soul's liberation, and transfer to a higher stage of existence. If we have faith to believe that there is a continued existence beyond the grave, we feel that we have arrived at a very satisfactory solution of one of our greatest problems.

Should we conclude that we can best explain our origin by an evolutionary hypothesis, we need not discard our faith in immortality. Evolution seems to be purposeful. "For we hold through all the ages, one increasing purpose runs." If this be so, then there is a fine place for immortality in that scheme. It becomes the ultimate goal of the evolutionary process.

It is inconceivable that a wise Creator would have laboured for ages to produce His masterpiece of the human soul, only to cast it finally "as rubbish to the void." God is more reasonably labouring to produce something to keep,—and that is worth keeping.

If spiritually we are the offspring of God, we must be immortal. We are thus con-

structed of God material, and must remain as enduring as the eternal God. Our faith in immortality is therefore as rationally grounded as our faith in the existence of God.

Our belief in immortality makes a difference in heart life. By it the Christian believer is assured that there is a blessed place in waiting for him "after the house of his earthly tabernacle is dissolved." To him the words of Jesus are supremely consoling, when He says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Believing this teaching makes the future radiant with promise. Christianity thus terminates gloriously.

This Christian hope makes suffering more endurable. The distressed one can comfort himself with the thought that his sufferings will not last always, and that there is before him a to-morrow that is full of joy, and free from pain and care. Paul put a rich meaning into the suffering of a believer when he said, "For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding

and eternal weight of glory." Many a one has thus found grace to endure persecution and affliction, remaining joyful in the midst of all adversities, believing that "to those that love God, all things work together for good."

Our belief in a hereafter makes a big moral difference. Revelation declares that there are two possible destinies in the future world. While the evil and the good may live together here, they will be separated in the next world, and each one must go to his own place. The condition of getting to heaven is based upon moral and spiritual fitness. In the first epistle of John we are told that "every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." The preparation for admission to heaven qualifies one best for true living in this present life. Since Christlikeness is the requirement for final approval, a strong incentive for righteous living is thus created.

The feeling largely prevails that it will require a judgment day, and a hereafter, to make right the many wrongs of this present life.

The hope of heaven makes optimists of all who have it. They have their faces turned toward the sunrise. They do not look backward to departed glories nor forward to deep-

ening gloom. They look toward a future, radiant with promise. "The pathway of the righteous is as a shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day."

The hopeful Christian is well described by Robert Browning in his Epilogue to Asolando, as

"One who never turned his back but marched
breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight
better,
Sleep to wake.
No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-
time,
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either
should be,
'Strive and thrive!' cry 'Speed,—fight on,
fare ever
There as here!'"

What our future will be, lies largely in our own control. We are very reasonably assured that we will be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body. The story is told of a wealthy woman who had an Irish servant girl. This servant girl was an earnest Chris-

tian, and supported the various benevolences almost as largely as did her mistress. Her mistress desiring to see more of a contrast between her own gifts and those of her servant, urged her not to be so liberal in her offerings. But she persisted in doing so. The mistress had a dream one night. She dreamed that she died, and arrived in heaven. An angel met her, and took her around to show her the place. They stopped before a beautiful mansion, and the angel said, "This mansion is the one to be occupied by Bridget." "What!" she exclaimed. "Is my servant girl to live in a mansion like that?" "If she is to have a palace like that, I wonder how gorgeous mine must be," she reasoned within herself. They passed on to the outlying section of the city, and finally turned up a much narrower street. She also noticed that the farther up the street they went the smaller the houses became. When they came near the end of the street she was shown into a modest, neat little cottage, and was told that it was to be her abode in heaven. She inquired why her servant girl should be given a much more beautiful place than she, and was told, "We built for you the best house we could out of the material you sent up."

VI

IS THE CHURCH A WORTH-WHILE INSTITUTION?

THE word *Church*, according to its modern language root, evidently refers to the people of the Lord. The Greek, "Ecclesia," refers to those "called out" from among the masses, and constituted a body of the followers of Jesus. Narrow ecclesiastics would undoubtedly say that the Church is composed of those who belong to their own denomination. In this discussion it refers to all true followers of Christ wherever found. Such a body alone can be "the holy Catholic Church" of the Apostles' Creed.

The Church has its origin in the teaching and personal influence of Jesus Christ. It had its inception in the Jewish synagogue. Numerically it grew from one lone Babe in Bethlehem's manger, more than nineteen centuries ago, to about five hundred million adherents at the present time. It has endured throughout this period, in spite of much persecution, from the days of Herod to the Ar-

menian massacres of our day. It represents a tree of many branches. But all of these branches have somehow an apostolic succession either directly or indirectly.

The Church has not had a faultless record. As it obtained power and influence, it frequently persecuted those who failed to agree with its original bodies. It has been censured for hypocrisy, some declaring that all professing Christians are hypocrites. It has been charged with possessing a caste consciousness void of democratic sociability. A pastor of an exclusive church did tell an applicant for membership that they have no vacancies at the present time. Lack of charitable consideration for others is often manifest. It has been guilty of maintaining a form of godliness minus its power. A lack of cordiality toward strangers, and selfish clannishness is sometimes evident. It has made itself guilty of unfair criticism of those who belong to other religious bodies. Contentions have frequently arisen that have disgraced its cause. It has often manifested a woeful lack of interest in its own community, and in the world at large. Some have used it as a moral cloak in order to perpetrate fraud.

Shall we then conclude that it is a failure and not worth the serious consideration of

thoughtful men? Before we do that, let us see if we can find any merits in it, and put them on the other side of the balance. To the Church was committed the task of evangelizing the world, by its Founder. It has ever since been largely the custodian of the sacred Scriptures and the oracles of God. It was launched in a pagan and heathen world. To have made a career such as it did, at least proves that there is some virility and power of endurance in it. The hymn writer spoke fittingly when he said:

"Oh, where are kings and empires now,
Of old that went and came?
But Lord, Thy Church is praying yet,
A thousand years the same."

The Church attacked the surrounding heathenism, and conquered it, and created a Christian civilization. Some centuries ago our own ancestors were savages in the wilds of Europe, drinking their wine out of the skull bones of their slain enemies.

But did not the World War indicate that Christianity has failed? That war was not caused by Christianity, unless indirectly on account of the democracy it fostered. The war resulted more from a revival of paganism. The side most largely representing pa-

ganism lost, and that which was more largely actuated by Christian idealism won.

Some of the by-products of our Christian civilization are, advanced education, the world's best music, art, and literature, greater wealth, better health, great inventions, better physical comforts, and numerous social reforms.

The chief product of the Church, however, is saintly character. To produce this, Jesus Christ has been presented to men as their Saviour. Through the transforming influence of His saving power the world's best citizens are produced.

We can scarcely imagine what the condition of the world would be to-day had it not been for Christianity. Read Gibbon's history of Rome, and find out about the morals of men before the Empire was Christianized. Or listen to a returned missionary who will tell you frankly about the morals prevalent in raw heathenism to-day. In this way you can in a measure realize what God has wrought through the Church.

An agnostic who got tired of seeing church steeples, and hearing church bells, and listening to Christian appeals, concluded to move to a pioneer town out west where there was no church. He was a man with a family.

He lived there for some time, and tried to bring up his family in a decent way. But the town was wholly abandoned to iniquity. There was no Christian restraint in the place. He finally wrote a letter to one of his college chums who entered the ministry, and begged him to come out to their town, and start a Sunday-school and church. He declared that the place was not fit to live in, and much less for raising a family of children.

In what was once considered a western state, a certain district concluded to prevent all churches from getting a foothold. For some time they were all rigidly excluded. Adjoining them was a district settled by Christian people. The outcome was, that in the Christian community they soon established a college, which is now a leading educational institution. The Christian community has raised a body of eminent men who have been shining lights in education, and in all the higher callings of the Church and State. They have churches now in the original non-Christian community, but it has always remained backward, and their descendants are labouring under a serious handicap. They have furnished no citizens of prominence to their country.

Some years ago a railroad had to be

abandoned in the southwest. It ran through a section of country that had no churches. The employees of the road were so dishonest, as were also the inhabitants which the road sought to serve, that it was impossible to make it pay.

Countries with low morals, such as Turkey, cannot prosper financially. Banks and the credit system cannot exist where there is no foundation of trustworthy character. The greatest economic prosperity ensues where the social teachings of Jesus are taught and practiced.

Why is it that so many people are not in the Church? Some do not wish to forsake their sinful life. Some dislike the Church on account of its imperfections. They should, however, be advised if they ever find a perfect church not to join it. Because if they did, it would no longer be a perfect church.

The Church is not a Perfect Saints' Club. The Church is rather a hospital for the cure of souls. The conditions of admission are an acknowledgment of ailments, and a desire to be cured. No sick one would say: "I do not care to be admitted to a hospital, because there are some there who are even more sick than I am." Yet some say that about the Church.

The influence of the Church is quite uplifting. Consider two men of about equal ability. One unites with the Church. He attends two services each Sunday, and the week-night prayer service. He attends a Bible class in the Sunday-school, and later teaches a class. He manifests an interest in missions, and studies world conditions. He also labours for a better home community. He reads a certain amount of religious literature. He does this for twenty years.

The other man avoids the Church. He frequents social clubs. He spends his Sundays reading the Sunday papers, and going to the golf course. He may take some interest in politics. He associates with men who have no interest in the Church. The chances are that their morals are below par.

Compare your two men after twenty years. You will be sure to find a world of difference between them. You will most likely find the former a representative citizen in some position of trust and honour. The other one's life is most likely to be commonplace in attainments and influence.

No one needs to stumble at the numerous sects. Multiplied sects are an indication of vitality in the Christian religion. It is far better to have a number of active rival sects

than to have but one religious body, stagnant and corrupt.

After you have said the worst you can about the Church, it still remains the whitest social institution on God's footstool.

Until an organization can be shown with better principles and a higher social life than the Church we will stand by that time-honoured institution, and

"For her our tears shall fall,
For her our prayers ascend.
To her our toils and cares be given
Till toils and cares shall end."

The most soul satisfying social fellowship is found among true followers of Jesus Christ. Why so many men have their religion in their wives' and daughters' names is hard to tell. Some one wrote:

"In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
You will find the Christian soldier
Represented by his wife."

The Christian religion presents a man's job, and a challenge to the best that is in him.

No occasion should ever be given to have it said that those outside the Church are a more attractive group with which to be asso-

ciated than those in the Church. A certain distinguished lawyer was asked whether he would prefer to live in heaven or hell. He answered the question by saying, "When I look at the men who claim to be going to heaven, and compare them with my friends that seem to be going the other way, I am forced to the conclusion that while heaven has doubtless the more agreeable climate, hell enjoys the better society." However, those who are spiritually minded will find the companionship of those who travel the heavenward way to be far the more interesting and satisfactory.

The question is often asked, "Cannot a person be a good Christian outside the Church?" The answer is: "Can a person be a good loyal soldier of his country's army when he is not enlisted?"

It can be noticed that the critics of the Church cling to lands that have churches and Bible schools. If it is better not to have churches, why do they not go to lands where they do not exist? It is cowardly to enjoy the blessings of a great Christian civilization and not support this mighty cause, heart and soul, from within the Church.

The Church with all her faults is the most worth-while institution on the face of the

earth. Mr. Babson, the great expert in finance, tells us that nothing will as surely guarantee business prosperity as the Church of Jesus Christ in earnest action.

In the dark days of the Civil War Abraham Lincoln said: "Thank God Who giveth us the churches." He found the best support in keeping up the morale of the armies, in nursing the sick, and comforting the dying, to come from that source. The churches, including the Young Men's Christian Association, the Red Cross, and kindred organizations, did this same work on a much larger scale during the recent war.

There is no substitute for the Church. Many fraternal organizations are possessed of worthy motives, but cannot take the place of that institution which expounds the Scriptures, upholds Christ as a Saviour, sends missionaries to heathen lands, and furnishes most of the money for charity. If true to its mission it will lay hold of the morally impotent, such as are rejected by other fraternities, and build them up into true manhood.

VII

DOES IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE IF WE PRAY?

BY prayer we mean the act of speaking to God. It usually consists of adoration, confession, petition, dedication, and thanksgiving. It has been defined as the psychological act by means of which the soul seeks and finds conscious contact with God.

Is prayer possible? Since God is a person, and of infinite intelligence, and everywhere present, there is every reason why we who are created in His image should be able to communicate with Him. The advice of Tennyson is:

> "Speak to Him thou, for He hears thee,
> For spirit with Spirit can meet;
> Closer is He than breathing,
> And nearer than hands or feet."

We have the praying instinct. Man has been called a praying animal. If he knows not the true God, he will worship some mythologic being, or fetish. No race, or tribe has ever

been found that did not in some way exercise the habit of prayer. There certainly is great naturalness in prayer.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.
Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infants' lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
His Majesty on high."

Just as natural as it is for a son to speak to his father, is it natural for a child of God to commune with his heavenly Father. It has been observed that men who apparently are without a religious frame of mind, will pray earnestly when in great distress. When exposed to danger in the recent war, many prayed who before led prayerless lives.

Does it make any difference if men pray? Some praying does not make any difference. The Psalmist says: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." In order to pray prevailingly, one must be in moral sympathy with God. James says: "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much."

If we ask for something that is not for our

good, it must of necessity be denied. If a child should beg to play with the pretty green powder, its mother would promptly lock up the Paris Green, where it could not possibly get it. Shakespeare, in Antony and Cleopatra, says: "We often beg that which is for our harm, and which the wise powers deny us for good, and so we find profit in the losing of our prayers." There are many who later felt grateful that some of their earnest petitions were not granted. When the writer was still a youth a maiden lady came to him and told him that she had prayed that he might become her husband. He has always since felt exceedingly glad that the Lord censors all prayers before passing them. Some one has imagined that the Almighty must maintain a dead prayer office to which those prayers are consigned that are not properly addressed.

It would be impossible for God to answer all prayers. Two equally sincere persons might be praying for opposing things. Many of the Germans prayed that their side might win the war. Among the Allies prayers arose, equally fervent, that their cause might prevail. It was impossible for God to give both sides the victory.

Prayers that are void of moral earnestness

are a waste of time and breath. According to the Scriptures they must be characterized by fervency and importunity to be effectual. In India they have prayer wheels so as to enable them to pray by machinery. A visitor to that country declared that he saw one of those wheels propelled by water-power. Thus the owner could pray without ceasing, while attending to other business. The boy who wrote his prayers on paper, and pinned it over his bed, and said on retiring, "Lord, those are my sentiments," also prayed mechanically. Much so-called praying falls into this class, and receives no consideration in heaven. The truth is that many who offer heartless prayers would be greatly surprised if their petitions were answered.

The question has been asked, Since God knows what is best for us, and is the Supreme Ruler, is it necessary for us to pray? Can our prayers cause God to do certain things that He otherwise would not do? There are many things He does for us regardless of our asking, but there are other things that He will not, and cannot do unless we ask Him.

Some hold that the value of prayer lies not in the fact that we get any requests granted. It lies rather in the fact that it is a pious exercise to pray and produces a reflexive good.

Our minds are filled with ennobling thoughts and aspirations, and thus we are improved through prayer. However, not many would pray if they thought that they would merely get exercise out of praying. Two boys went out one day digging for a treasure they supposed was hidden in a field. In the evening they returned without the treasure. Their father consoled them with the thought that the day was not utterly lost because they got plenty of wholesome exercise. They, however, did not continue their digging, merely for the sake of the exercise. When we earnestly pray, we are after treasure, and not exercise.

A part of prayer is communing. Even when we do not get our petitions granted, we at least are in infinitely good company while speaking to God. St. Francis of Assisi, who spent many hours in prayer, sometimes would only in a heartfelt way, with intervening pauses say, "God. God. God." That, too, was real praying.

In acknowledging the blessings bestowed upon us we thank Him; and we always feel better after having thanked our benefactors.

There is one petition that is always granted if sincerely offered. When in penitence a sinner asks to be forgiven, amidst the jubila-

tions of heaven that petition is granted. The publican who prayed "God be merciful to me, a sinner," went down from the temple justified.

There are certain Scriptural conditions that must be fulfilled in order to make prayer effective. Jesus said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." That means that we must be in true soul sympathy with Him. The transmitting instrument must be attuned to the receiving instrument before the wireless message can come through.

A further condition that Jesus mentioned is praying in His name. He said: "If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it." This means more than closing your prayer by saying, "And this I ask in Jesus' name." No improper prayer could be made in His name. His name stands for that which is good and unselfish. Our prayers must harmonize with that for which His name stands, in order to be effectual. Faith, or belief that God will, and does answer, is also one of the Biblical conditions.

Can it be scientifically proven that prayers are answered? No, the unbeliever could always say that it was a coincidence. A certain skeptic proposed putting this matter to a test.

He suggested that two hospitals should be chosen with an equal number of patients. Those in one hospital should be prayed for, while those in the other are ignored, and then the outcome should be noted. The Christian people, thus challenged, did not respond. In the first place, it was making trial of God. Jesus said, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Again, who could tell but in one or the other of those hospitals there were those whom the Lord purposed to call out of this world without granting them recovery? Such an experiment, whatever the result, would prove nothing.

Each one can, however, become fully assured that God answers prayer. If you desire forgiveness, and a better life, ask God and He will hear, and answer. Do you desire comfort in distress? Ask and you shall receive. Do you desire the salvation of others? Pray for them. "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." Charles H. Spurgeon was visited one day by a woman who had an unconverted husband. She wished to know how he might be won to the faith. Mr. Spurgeon suggested that they pray for him, which they forthwith did. The woman returned home, and when she entered her house, she found her husband in prayer.

Numerous instances of this kind could be mentioned. The China Inland Mission folks found their missionary force inadequate one year. They needed about one hundred recruits. They prayed the Lord of the harvest for additional reapers. The following year one hundred came, and before the year was up there were more than a hundred that volunteered. This is all the more marvellous because no salaries are guaranteed those who go. They are given such amounts are are specifically contributed for that work, and those amounts are given in answer to prayer. With them their going is always a venture of faith in God.

We may readily believe that many have had their health restored through prayer, since the days that Jesus wrought His miracles of healing. There is no reason why a believer should not ask to be directed of God in his business pursuits. No one that was ever signally useful in the work of God's Kingdom led a prayerless life. They were all persons who were mighty in prayer. Jesus taught men how to pray, and set an example by His habit of prayer for people of all times.

It makes a big difference if you pray. You can have more righteousness, better health, larger peace of mind, better business prosper-

ity, more happiness and contentment, larger usefulness, and a better eternity if you pray. Tennyson said:

"More things are wrought by prayer than this
world dreams of."

"For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

Persons who pray well are more likely to be active in religious work. Such persons are quite likely to offer themselves as the agent in answering their prayers. They will say as did Isaiah, "Here am I, send me." Fred Douglas said that he prayed for a long time that he might be freed from slavery. But he never got his liberty until he ran away. He said that when he got his prayers into his heels they soon found an answer.

A certain group from a country church met one evening at the home of a poor family to pray for them. While the prayer meeting was under way, a knock was heard at the door. When they opened it, the son of a farmer stood there, and said: "Pop could not come to the prayer meeting to-night, so he sent his prayers. They are out in the sleigh, and if some of the folks will please help me, I will unload them." So they unloaded a lot of po-

tatoes, ham and other provisions. It broke up the prayer meeting. Earnest praying is likely to get into our hands, feet, tongue and heart.

The best kind of religious activity is, "To pray as if everything depended upon God, and then work as if everything depended upon you."

The prayerless man keeps God out of his life. Prayer opens the door and bids him enter. To be truly happy the soul needs God as much as an infant its mother. One time when Jesus prayed He was transfigured. More or less of this happens to all who pray sincerely.

Prayer enables us to move the hand that moves the world. Just what its philosophy is should not concern us as much as the fact thereof. One needs not to know all the secrets of electricity to use it for expelling darkness from his house. All he needs to know is how to press a button, and his house is flooded with light. We need not know everything about the philosophy of praying to reap the full benefits of a life of prayer. All we need to do is to pray, and get the results. It is the most important business of life to pray.

VIII

SHOULD CHRISTIAN FOLKS INTERFERE WITH NON-CHRISTIAN LANDS THROUGH MISSIONARY PROPAGANDA?

THE biggest business in the world is the missionary work carried on by the churches of the United States. These employ about ten thousand missionaries, and fifty thousand native helpers, at an annual expense of about twenty-five million dollars. The next largest business in the world is that of the Standard Oil Company. Is Christianity justified in making such efforts to change the religious faith of those nations that are not now Christian?

Is there not a tendency among the various races to develop along their own lines the religion best suited to their own peculiar mental and heart traits? If Christianity suits us best, then why not enjoy it, and leave those of other lands and other faiths unmolested? Their religion evidently suits them best. Is there not good in all religions? Then why not permit people to live up to the best there is in their religious faith, and develop along lines

that are most natural to them? Is it not meddlesome to interfere with these heart matters of remote peoples? Should we not live our religion in the best possible way, and if any other people should recognize its merits, let them come and get it; but let us not go and urge it upon them.

In replying to these questions, it must be admitted that Christian people should not compel other people to embrace Christianity. It never should be forced on people in legal and military ways. All people should enjoy religious freedom. That religious enthusiast of the middle ages certainly overstepped the bounds of propriety when, in central Europe, he drove the natives up to the baptismal font at the point of the bayonet. The Moslem religion has followed that missionary method very largely, and could never have made the progress it did without it. "The Koran, or the sword," has for ages been the choice given those who have fallen under the military control of Islam. Christianity cannot be true to its genius, and seek to propagate itself by such methods.

Christianity is a missionary religion. Jesus was a rabbi or teacher. He followed the best teaching methods ever employed. He had disciples or learners about Him. These were in-

vited, not compelled, to hold this relationship to Him. Jesus presented certain truths which must make their own appeal. If they fail to interest any one, he is always at liberty to ignore them.

After training these disciples, Jesus commanded them to go and make disciples of all nations. He thus took the whole world into His plan.

Those who have attempted to spread Christianity have discovered that the teachings of Christ furnish most unique material for didactic purposes. Almost invariably, those who obtain a true acquaintanceship with Christ and His teachings, become very enthusiastic propagandists. Finding it so satisfactory in their own life, they recommend it to others, and urge it upon them. After this fashion it has spread itself throughout the world. It was the intention of its founder that it should thus propagate itself. Christianity has always asserted itself strongly in its pedagogical and educational phases. It makes its appeal to the intellect. There is something thought-producing about it. It has inspired what must readily be conceded the world's best culture.

To those who are loyal followers of Christ, His command has been a sufficient reason for

missionary effort. His command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," is regarded as one that is of binding significance to His Church. Recognizing His authority, the Church obeys His command. An English clergyman asked the Duke of Wellington if he thought it was worth while to carry on mission work in India. The Duke replied, "What are your marching orders?" To this soldier it was not the business of an underling to question a command. It is his business to obey it. The marching orders of its founder are, to go into all the world, and preach Christianity. Removing the mission feature from Christianity, you subtract that which is vital to its existence. Some one has truthfully said that missions are the life blood, the lung breath, and heart beats of Christianity.

The life of the cause depends upon it. Without its missionary enthusiasm, Christianity would deteriorate and vanish. Christians believe that they have a good thing in their religion, and they are taught to impart good to others. There is no such thing as a selfish Christianity. The strange thing about it is, the more you give it away, the more you have of it yourself.

If the history of missions should be written completely, you would have a record of the

world's most heroic deeds. Missionaries have subjected themselves to the most severe dangers, and suffered some of the most intense hardships, in discharging their divine commission. Many despised lucrative positions at home that they might go and preach Christ, even if nothing but chains and death should await them. However, the blood of such martyrs has always served as the seed of the Church.

For Christianity to carry out its world program it should not be merely *a* world religion, but *the* world religion. It is not only intended for those of Western lands, where it made its first great conquests. It is really an oriental religion in its origin, and is, no doubt to this day, more readily understood by orientals than by those of the Occident. For some reason it went with the course of empire, westward. It is only in more recent years that renewed efforts have been made to reintroduce it to the Orient, as well as to Africa, and the islands of the sea.

Through missionary activity, it has been discovered that it makes its appeal to all classes everywhere in a similar way, and produces a like effect. Its teaching of God, morality, social relationship, and immortality, is unmatched in any of the ethnic religions. Wherever it

goes it brings light, and joy, a new life, and a new hope. It has clearly demonstrated that it, and it alone, has the capacity of serving as *the* world religion.

Christianity is responsible for many valuable by-products. Through its missions, civilization is spread, markets are opened, and trade is increased. Some one said that for every dollar England has invested in missions it gets ten dollars back in trade. And the countries that are Christianized become greatly enriched.

The leading motive should, however, not be a mercenary one on the part of those who do the evangelizing. The great question should ever be, "Does it benefit the lands to which it is brought?" It has benefited Western lands. It has made them strong, so that now they control nearly the entire world. United Christendom easily commands the entire world. It has awakened a new life in Japan, and Japan has accepted largely our Western culture, even more than it did the Christian religion that has produced the culture. It was only after that country came into touch with Christianity that it was thus affected. It is now one of the great world powers.

China, realizing what has come to Japan, is open to-day to Western culture as never before. It is very important that a country like that

should have upon it the restraint of Christian ideals. If it should receive the power due to Western culture, without having its heart regenerated by Christianity, it would become the world's greatest menace. The Chinese are a stalwart race. They have a power of endurance, unrivalled. If they should obtain the power incident to a more enlightened civilization, and be governed by selfish motives, it would be easy for some Kaiser to arise among them, and inspire them with an ambition for world conquest. With the modern ease of communication by wire, paper, book, and travel, they will get our learning. But that learning will not be safe with them without our Western religion.

It must be quite evident to the people of all nations that the United States has the wealth, resources, ingenuity, and man power to engage in a conquest such as would have overjoyed a Napoleon, or Alexander. But the United States has given Cuba her freedom, demanded no indemnity from Spain, paid for the Philippines, returned the indemnity to China, and demanded no indemnity as a result of the World War. Would any other land than one under the control of Christian ideals have acted thus? If the Moslems had the military advantage of the great Christian powers of the world to-day,

what could we expect? The entire world will be a safer place in which to live if the teachings of Him will be observed who said, "As ye would that men would do to you, do ye even so unto them," and who taught us to love our enemies, and do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us.

It is quite imperative that Christianity should control, with its beneficent influence, all lands of the earth. Where Christian influence has not come, the world has made no progress; there the people are living much as they did in the days of Abraham. Where the religion of Christ has gone, better sanitation, better education, better social conditions, better farming, better housing, and a better life have followed.

Christian people owe it to themselves, and to the world at large, to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ unto all men. Dr. Van Dyke said that some people desire to know how the heathen can be saved without the Gospel. But he declared the greater question to be, "How can we who claim to have the Gospel be saved, if we deny it to the heathen world?"

IX

WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF CHRISTIAN EFFORT?

THE student of history and science has great reason to conclude that nature is teleological. He can detect a purpose in it, as Tennyson did, who said, "Yet I hold through all the ages one increasing purpose runs." Believing that God has created our universe, and is immanent in it, energizing and controlling it, we can readily conclude that He has an ultimate objective. We can, with the poet, believe that there is

> "Some far-off divine event,
> Toward which the whole creation moves."

The human soul is undoubtedly God's creative masterpiece. It is clearly His desire that perfection of being should be the individual goal. This is the Christian's moral objective. Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Christian perfection is not merely a negative goodness; it is far more a positive one. The exemplary Christian is good for something. He is assertive, and progressive in his goodness.

Christianity is a social religion. The Christian must relate himself properly to his fellowmen. He cannot obtain his own salvation, unless he assumes a Christian attitude toward his neighbour, as well as toward his God.

Christianity is therefore indeed a kingdom. It is a social institution. It has a world program. The ultimate goal of Christianity is essentially the same as that of the individual. It is the redemption of human society. This implies the perfection of all individuals, and obtaining for them a proper social relationship. The work of Christianity is never completed until this objective is reached.

The complete establishment of God's Kingdom is the ultimate Christian objective. The Hebrew ideal for this world was that a Messiah should appear, who would subject the world to His own sway, and rule all lands through chosen representatives of His elect people, Israel. The disciples had this conception. They repeatedly questioned Him about it. He said certain things about His Kingdom which was difficult for them to grasp. He said that His Kingdom does not come by observation, and that the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, and that His Kingdom is not of this world.

Because He did not assume the position of a

Napoleon, and proceed to conquer the world, and establish His Kingdom, those of His own race were disappointed in Him. By His constant emphasis of positive goodness, and His criticism of empty ceremonialism and hypocrisy, He was rejected and finally crucified.

The early disciples, hearing Him speak about His coming again, believed that He would soon reappear, and then proceed to subjugate the world unto Himself. Thus a Christian Messianic hope was created akin to that of ancient Israel.

There are those who interpret the Scriptures as teaching that this world must become increasingly corrupt, until its iniquity is so great that He will finally reappear and gather His ancient people of Israel to their country once more. They will then readily be converted, and recognize His Messiahship. He will enthrone Himself at Jerusalem, and rule the world from that centre for a thousand years. After that He will withdraw to the skies with all those who have recognized His Messiahship. Then there will be a period of great tribulation. After that Satan will be bound, and cast into the lake of fire. Then the unrighteous dead will be resurrected, and all the unrighteous will be judged, and condemned to share the fate of Satan.

Others have understood Christ to teach that His Kingdom was begun when He was here on this earth, by His teaching and redemptive power; that His influence is as a leaven which will leaven the whole lump; and that it is as a mustard seed that will gradually grow into a great tree. Those who have taken this view believe that it is the duty of all to labour for the elevation of human society, and to enthrone Christ in the hearts of all men. This is to be done through missionary activity and social service. When these pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," they have a vision of a redeemed human society. These are active in moral and social reforms, believing, as they are effected, they mark the progress of the coming Kingdom.

Those who hold that the human race is largely a failure, and that only a select remnant can be saved, manifest very little interest in various social problems.

Many have come to believe that Christianity is far more than a spiritual salvation for the individual. They hold that if Christ's Kingdom is to come to this world it will need a thorough cleansing. They believe that a living wage should come to all worthy toilers; that they should live in sanitary houses; that they should

be provided with wholesome amusements; that it is important that children should have proper play facilities; that they should not be handicapped with the burden of labour at an early age; that proper educational facilities should be provided for all; that thorough sanitation should be introduced; and that all social and economic relationships should be adjusted in accordance with the teaching of the golden rule. They believe that these matters should be emphasized and realized, without in the least way minimizing Jesus' teaching concerning a spiritual regeneration. Thus their great Christian ideal is to create such conditions as will be most conducive to the building of true manhood.

The first great need of men is a spiritual regeneration; without this, selfishness is bound to prevail. It has repeatedly been observed that men have emphasized social justice as long as that meant more on their pile. But when they once arrived at such a state of material prosperity that it really meant subtracting from that pile, they suddenly changed their method of agitation. Those who believe that the ills of this world can be cured without the heart of humanity being healed are labouring under a great delusion.

The ideal for this earth is heaven. Jesus

prayed, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." His will is perfectly done there. However, this earth does not remind you very much of heaven; it often reminds you much more of an inferno. He who labours for the uplift of humanity meets with many discouragements. In the curing of human ills there often occur very discouraging relapses. But we can notice that progress is being made. It would be a gloomy outlook for our planet if this were not so. Christianity has its golden age in the future, and this keeps those who labour in its behalf in good cheer.

Can we hope for complete success? John Fisk said, "The perfecting of humanity is to be the glorious consummation of nature's long and tedious work." If all men, at any given time should be thus perfected, could that perfection be maintained? In the case of every succeeding generation, the same culture would have to be given.

With no essential change in human nature, we can see no ground for believing that the entire race at any time could attain to Christian perfection; or if it did attain thereto, that it could thus perpetuate itself. But it is nevertheless our business to aspire to this end. We are taught to pray for this happy consummation. Our effort should be to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

The ultimate goal of Christian striving is not merely to make this earth a heavenly place. However perfect and agreeable human society may become upon this earth, it is not a place in which we can, or would, live alway. At the longest, our stay on this planet is but brief. We cannot hope, except by an extraordinary cataclysm, to see this world perfected. Our criminal and divorce courts are kept too busy, and there is too much work for our police forces to do. Too many asylums are required. There are too many red lights and red flags in evidence. There is too much greed, and too much bloodshed. If this is all of life, to live for a while in such a world, and then cease to be, life is a mockery, and is not worth the struggle.

To enter heaven, like which this earth should be, but may never thus become, is the ultimate goal of our existence. It is there that the soul will obtain the supreme prize.

If you can say to the martyr for a righteous cause that there is a heaven of righteousness and joy beyond, it will be a great comfort to him. If those who go into battle in the interest of high ideals can be told that if they fall in the discharge of their duty, that there is a heaven of peace to receive them, they feel all the more compensated for their sacrifice. It is a real comfort to all the weary toilers of this

life to know that if they qualify for it, there is a place where the lash of the taskmaster cannot reach them, and where the weary struggle for an existence is over, and the time of rest and plenty is at hand. To know that earth's tribulations will work out for us an eternal weight of glory will make them seem more light.

Heaven is the place of perfected human society. To all those who strive for this high ideal of heaven in the God-appointed way, it will finally appear. In this sense the ultimate goal can be reached.

A certain man, while ill, had a peculiar vision. He dreamed that a beneficent influence and power came, and took him out of his sick chamber, and by a spiral course, took him upward, and onward, past stars on every hand. Finally they arrived on the Milky Way, that great thoroughfare of the universe. On that they travelled until they got to the end, and then there was a great abyss beyond. Suddenly the constellations assumed the forms that they represented in astronomy, and took on the appearance of fierce anger, and began, as monsters, to pursue him. He was filled with fear, as he could not go any farther, while the beneficent power went on, leaving him alone. Suddenly this power called to him to leap into the

abyss. There being no other choice, he leaped; and, lo! to his surprise, instead of falling, and never being able to land, he found himself standing upon the adamant, surrounded by this glorious beneficent power. All the monsters that were pursuing him rushed to the end of the Milky Way, and plunged into the abyss, and disappeared. All of a sudden the constellations reappeared, and the stars were all twinkling in a friendly way. The vision seemed so real to him that he never forgot it. What a comfort it is to know that there is a city of refuge beyond, where the threatening and fierce monsters that pursued us in this life cannot reach us, and where we will be safe in the care of a loving and beneficent Power.

We should not become so absorbed in the contemplation of future glory as to lose interest in the life that now is. We should help this world forward to its God-appointed goal while we live in it, and so make our contribution toward the sum total of human welfare. We shall have an eternity in which to investigate and enjoy heaven. Yet this need not keep us from rejoicing that the Christian career, and the accomplishments of the Kingdom of God, will terminate in the effulgence of heavenly glory. That New York State physician had a remarkable vision, when recently stunned in

an automobile accident, in which his wife was killed. He said that it seemed to him as if they got out of their automobile in the usual way and arrived at a very peaceful place. A white-haired man with a flowing beard met them, and told them that this is heaven. He also told them that they are much concerned in heaven about the great amount of wickedness in this world. He said that there should be a larger number of persons in the world interested in its improvement. The physician declared that the city he beheld was beautiful beyond description. There was an unusually bright light in the centre of it, and when he asked what that was, he was told that it was where the throne of God is located. Suddenly it became foggy about him, and his wife was parted from him, going in the direction of the light, and he found himself becoming conscious on a hospital bed. We need have no doubt about the reality of heaven. Tennyson believed this when he said in that well-known song of Christian triumph at the close of a long, and well-spent life:

"And though from out our bourne of time and place
The tide may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar."

Paul represented a high type of Christian attainment, but acknowledged that he had not yet reached perfection. But he followed after it, and forgetful of bygone things, he reached out after the things before him, and pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Paul was not pursuing treasure at the base of an elusive rainbow. Nothing is impossible in character attainment to him who is actuated by a high, and holy ambition, and who follows the divine direction.

While a full and final salvation from sin is obtained on entering heaven, it is possible that the process of character attainment may be an eternal one. In that tropic land of the soul where all good things grow luxuriantly, is there any reason why the soul should not enjoy a further growth, and development, evermore being changed from glory unto glory, approximating the high ideal of the absolutely perfect Being? Let that be as it may, believers can most assuredly comfort themselves with the Apostle John by saying, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

X

IS THE PRESENT CROP OF HUMANS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THOSE OF PREVIOUS TIMES?

IF the Biblical account of creation is to be historically understood, we must believe that Adam and Eve were perfect when created, and all our human defects are due to the fall of the race. Even then we can conclude that after the fall the drift of the race was upward, rather than downward.

The evolutionary view is that man is progressively outliving his brute tendencies, and is becoming more humane. The evolutionary origin of man is, however, merely a theory, and not a demonstrated, scientific fact. Skeletons of ancient human remains have disclosed no marked difference, in comparison with those of our day.

Human nature is essentially the same now as it was in the beginning. Cain became jealous of his brother, and slew him, just as many a present-day Cain has done.

It is a well-established fact that culture will

do much for man. The fruit grower can produce wonders through his scientific methods of pruning, grafting, cross-breeding, spraying, fertilizing, and cultivating. Astonishing results can thus be achieved, in the way of producing fine specimens. The seed, however, remains wild. If he will plant the seed of a fine specimen of fruit it will grow into a wild tree. Each tree requires its own culture to keep it from growing wild. A cultivated field, or farm, if neglected for ten years, will look like a wilderness.

This is true of the human species. Each individual needs separate culture to improve him. If not given proper care he will grow up in a wild way. If the institutions that produced our civilization should be destroyed, and our race neglected, it would retrograde to primitive conditions in a brief period.

Culture has done much for the race. Our ancestors were savages. By studying conditions among the unenlightened races of our day we can realize the racial progress that has been made, and what we would be were it not for the culture that has made us different.

Since we are considering the influence of Christianity in this series of studies, let us take a glance at world conditions as they were before Christianity was introduced, and compare

them with the world of to-day. We can only mention, in a passing way, that our education is superior in this age to what it was in ancient times. In ancient times only a privileged few could obtain an advanced education. They had a goodly number of sages and literary lights. No doubt, a group of young folks in the Augustan age could have made the same average college grades as the young people of this day, could they have had the advantages of the present time.

Sanitation and medical science have made great advancements, and we have the benefit thereof. We are enjoying great conveniences that the ancients did not enjoy. The Apostle Paul never heard of a railroad train, a telegraph, telephone, printing press, photograph camera, automobile, phonograph, aeroplane, steamship, trolley car, modern grist mill, hot water heating plant, electric light, suspension bridge, grain binder, daily paper, cotton mill, department store, wireless messages, a watch, and countless other conveniences that we enjoy. We would not trade our day for his, in so far as the comforts of life are concerned.

Let us see if we would prefer the form of government under which Paul lived? It was in the age in which the Roman Empire flourished. Her emperors would send invading

armies into lands, and subjugate them, and make them "pay tribute unto Cæsar." They would take many into captivity, and distribute and sell them as slaves. A slave would have very few civil rights. He was almost absolutely at the mercy of his owner, who could torture, or kill him, if he wished. If a man was murdered, all his able-bodied slaves were killed for not having protected him.

In matters of worship, would we prefer to reverence some emperor, and rebuild the temples of Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Saturn, or some other gods, giving expression to our religious emotions by worshipping at such shrines? The worship of most primitive people was grossly sensual. Professor Phelps of Yale said that if the old-time Greek and Roman gods attempted to carry on in our day as in those olden times, we would have them all in jail for gross immorality.

Let us see if we would exchange our football, baseball, and tennis for the sports of that earlier day. They engaged in some sports that have endured to our time, such as foot racing and disc throwing. Their chariot races were not so much different from our horse and automobile racing. But the events that drew their largest crowds were sports in which there was blood shed. They had their gladiatorial

contests in which there were thousands slain. They were entertained by watching wild beasts fighting with each other, or with men. There are still a few lands in which they have bull fights, but that is not regarded as an index to their advanced civilization.

Let us take a look at their methods of punishment. It was believed that criminals should be tortured. Their prisons were, as a rule, miserable, dark dungeons. Every conceivable device for torture was employed. This was evidenced by the methods pursued in persecuting Christians. Nero had his evening's entertainment by chaining Christians to posts in his gardens, and then covering them with pitch, had the fagot applied, furnishing him with human torches. They were thrown to the wild beasts in the arena, where they were torn limb from limb, and devoured, as vast audiences looked on. They were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and tortured to death by fierce dogs. They were fastened to red-hot metallic chairs and roasted to death. They were soaked in oil, and burnt. Some were drowned; others crucified; others flayed, and dismembered. Some were wounded severely, and then had salt and vinegar poured over them. Some were tortured by being stretched on racks.

After the Roman Empire became Christian,

and later became corrupt, some of these methods were used to persecute those who sought to introduce reforms; and even some of these reformers, in turn, severely persecuted such as did not agree with them.

Would we exchange our period of little capital punishment, and of prison reform, and of religious freedom, for the former ages of intolerance and torturesome punishment? There is in our age a growing sense of the sanctity of human life.

Would our women care to return to the ancient day? They were then not regarded as worth educating. They were substantially the slave of man. Daughters were bartered in marriage without considering their wishes. Women were regarded as man's inferior. Would our women care to give up their present-day women's rights and return to those sad days?

Those were the days of superstition. Demented people were regarded as bewitched. Hundreds of people suspected of practicing witchcraft were most severely tortured and killed.

The marriage tie was not regarded with much sanctity. It is only too much so in our day; however, we believe that most much married folks of our time would hang their heads

in shame if they met the couple of which St. Jerome writes (Lecky, Vol. 2, p. 307) stating that at Rome there lived a wife who married her twenty-third husband, and she was the twenty-first wife of that husband. It may be that some of the Russian Bolshevists are beating that record in our day. If so, be it said for the rest of Christendom that it has advanced to a higher domestic standard.

In reforms much progress has been made. The tendency in government reform is toward democracy. Slavery has been abolished; freedom of worship is tolerated; intemperance is being removed; prison reforms have been instituted; the opium trade is being suppressed; duelling has been abolished; in advanced countries, lotteries are condemned; and pugilistic contests, if brutal, are being restrained.

There is very little ancient literature that can be used by our public schools without expurgation.

Christian culture has had its effect on the race; where this has not come primitive conditions still prevail. Few missionaries care to have their children grow up in contact with raw heathenism. Immorality is so prevalent, and all moral standards so low, that they prefer to keep them out of danger. They some-

times send them home, leaving them in the care of relatives or friends for their education and proper discipline.

The moral and cultural progress of the race has been fostered by Christian influence. Those who sigh for the good old days have a fanciful past with which to compare the present. Crimes of all kinds are committed in our time, but are not committed by true Christians. To the extent that Christianity in its purity prevails, good morals prevail. Proper education lessens crime, but mere education could not successfully cope with sin. Modern education is a product of our Christian civilization, and not its cause. How foolish those are who attribute certain economic wrongs to Christianity, and are seeking its suppression as in some parts of the world. If there is something that claims to be superior to Christianity, let it prove its worth in some unenlightened part of the world. Until it can produce better results than the religion of Jesus in dealing with raw humanity, it must of necessity stand condemned, and it should keep its unholy hands of destruction from the sacred altars of the religion that has stood the test of ages.

In its struggle upwards, much has been done in the name of Christianity that was

most pagan, and no apology can be offered for it except that we cannot expect the perfected plant until it has had sufficient time to mature. We overlook in children what we condemn in men. Much that was done in the name of Christianity was due to its immature age, so far as the human appropriation of it is concerned. Our claim is, that the only lever capable of uplifting this world to better conditions, is in the hands of true Christians, and is contained in the sacred Scriptures.

The work is far from complete. Yet we can join with Tennyson in saying:

> "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

We of America do not hesitate in saying: "Better ten years of our present-day America than fifty years of that Europe about which Tennyson wrote." Truly:

> "We are heirs of all the ages, in the foremost ranks of time."

What a sad comment on the human race it would be if we, who have had the benefit of the experience of all our ancestors, were not in advance of them in ways of living.

The answer to our question is, that some

people now living are no better than the worst of ancient times. The best of us are no better than the best of those living in the primitive days of Christianity. The possibility is that some of the primitive Christians have never been excelled in real goodness. Undoubtedly we have a larger number of good people now than ever were in the world in any previous generation, so that the average conditions are better than in any former time. The best have large room for still further improvement, and the whole round world is in crying need of a better day that should come to it. The only star of hope for a struggling race is Christianity, with its missionary motive imparted to it by the Man of Nazareth, who also was the Son of God.

Wherever vital Christianity has gone in this world it has improved conditions. The hope of the world lies in it, rather than in evolution. Very few evidences indicating moral improvement through evolution can be obtained by observing conditions in such sections of the world as have been untouched by Christian culture.

XI

WHAT IS A TWENTIETH CENTURY PERSON TO DO WITH A SABBATH DAY?

THE Sabbath is a day of ancient origin. It has been observed by the Jews, Christians, Mohammedans and some pagan countries. It has been used as a day of rest, recreation, and worship. The word "Sabbath" is of Hebrew origin, and means "rest." It is said of Jehovah that He rested on the Sabbath day after the six days of creation. The command to keep the Sabbath was embodied in the Mosaic decalogue.

It has health-maintaining value. Some have regarded it as an arbitrary decree, and of no real worth whatever. They have looked upon it as a burden placed upon men, hindering them in their prosperity and enjoyment. The Sabbath has, however, served as a wise provision in the maintenance of health. To labour unceasingly from day to day makes life a drudgery, and causes an early breakdown of the body. Some one ob-

served that we are seven-day clocks; we run down in six, and then need one day for winding up.

Life insurance companies are beginning to consider the matter of Sabbath rest. A person who regularly observes a Sabbath is a better insurance risk than one who does not. People who do not observe a Sabbath are more subject to insanity than others.

The Sabbath has been proven to be a matter of wise economy. More work can be done by a person in six days, if he observes a Sabbath, than in seven, if he does not observe a Sabbath. This is true of beasts as well as men. In the early days, when cattle and sheep were driven long distances to seaport towns, they discovered that the droves that rested one day in seven were the first to arrive. It has been noticed that work done in the morning is of a better quality than work done in the afternoon. And work done in the early part of the week is better than that done later in the week, on the part of those who observe the Sabbath. Accidents are more likely to occur in the afternoon than in the morning. All of this indicates man's need of sufficient rest.

Great Britain discovered that they were not able to make the progress during the war, in

the manufacture of ammunition, by working every day, as they could by observing the Sabbath. They worked their plants as hard as they could every day for a while, when greatly in need of war material. But they were wearing out their men, and so they gave them one day of rest in seven, and found that they got more accomplished that way.

Labouring people as a rule are heartily in favour of Sabbath observance. That the Sabbath is not more generally observed on the part of those who employ labour is because they are governed by a blind money greed. They have not discovered that they could have larger prosperity if they observed the Sabbath, being thus enabled to get better service from their employees.

As to whether or not a Sabbath is a real benefit to any one, depends upon how he spends it. If he makes out of it a day of dissipation, he will come to his work the next morning considerably below par. To such it is a hindrance rather than a help. Theirs is indeed, invariably, a blue Monday. A question submitted to certain leading manufacturers was, "How do your Sunday picnickers compare on Monday with those who make Sunday a home day, and one of religious worship?" The answer, of course, was that

the Sabbath-keeping people report on the next morning in the better condition. If the Sabbath is spent in such a way as to require another day, or two, to get over its effects, it becomes far more of a hindrance than a help.

The chief benefit of the Sabbath is a religious one. The Sabbath day has been the great dynamo for the generation of religion. It is doubtful if the great religions that have observed a Sabbath could have maintained themselves without it. It is the day on which people are released from their employ, and have their great opportunity for worship. At the services they attend, they hear learned discourses on religion and morals. On the Sabbath, they have the privilege of attending Bible Schools, and other religious assemblies. Many lay aside their other literature on that day, and read that which will promote their spiritual welfare.

Jesus said: "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." This is the great home day on which parents can become acquainted with their children, and with each other. It affords the opportunity for visiting that sick friend, either at his home, or the hospital. It brings with it the opportunity for writing that neglected letter to the folks at home who never let a day go by without praying for

your welfare. It is the day for finding out how that neighbour in distress is faring, and what you can do for him.

Many do not use their Sabbath for soul building. They find it their opportunity for doing that which is harmful. In large cities, it often happens that there is more crime, disorderliness, vice, and debauchery committed between Saturday and Monday than at any other time.

It is highly essential that the day should be guarded. The laws that are enacted in the interest of the sanctity of the Sabbath are not blue laws; they are white laws.

Our prosperity and our civilization depend upon our religious institutions, and our religious institutions depend upon the Sabbath for their perpetuation and development. Anything that tends to undermine the morals of our people is our country's worst enemy.

Only such industries as of necessity must be kept going on the Sabbath should be allowed to operate on that day. Those who would make out of the Sabbath a holiday, instead of a holy day, are not our good citizens. Why are there those who strenuously oppose Sunday baseball and motion pictures? Because those who would attract the boy from the street into a religious school, where the

effort is made to build him up into true manhood, find it almost impossible to do so where a baseball game is played near by at the same hour. If the motion picture place is open on the Sabbath, it becomes a strong rival attraction to the church service. The quality of its reels strongly condemn it as a substitute for a religious service.

The cry against Sabbath legislation does not come from our working people, nor from business concerns as a body. Those who clamour for the open Sunday are mainly such as would take advantage of this day of leisure for financial profit at the expense of those who are enjoying a day of rest.

Let Saturday afternoons, certain holidays, and the occasional half day off, be the time for athletic sports and other amusements. Let the evenings suffice for entertainment; but preserve the ancient institution of the Sabbath for the purpose on behalf of which it was instituted.

The high speed twentieth century people need the Sabbath just as much as did the ancients, and a great deal more. Those who lived the simple life of long ago, laboured far less under a strain than the people of the present time.

Surely we do not want the continental Sab-

bath in America. We do not want our industrial plants and places of business open on the Sabbath. We do not want it to be a day of hilarity and debauchery. If we retain it as a great rest and home day, and a day for good reading and church going, our civilization and prosperity are secure. If we fail in this, we will find ourselves on the toboggan, which will speed us to that level to which other nations fell, who thus debauched themselves.

No plea is made here for fanaticism. Much that has been done in the interest of Sabbath observance is unreasonable. Works of real necessity are always in order. Many questions arise which each one must answer for himself, as to what he should or should not do on the Sabbath day. The man who would not unload his beast of burden because the Sabbath began before he had time to do so, was exceedingly cruel. In ancient wars there occurred a number of Jewish slaughters because they would not fight on their Sabbath days. Any one that would not eat an egg which a chicken laid on the Sabbath day is surely suffering from an overworked conscience. Jesus had a good deal of controversy with fanatical Sabbatarians. He told them that it is lawful to do good on the Sab-

bath. He did many acts of mercy on that day in spite of criticism. There are numerous household details that must be attended to on the Sabbath. The average sensible person can usually be trusted to decide for himself what does or does not violate the true spirit of the day.

It has been a matter of controversy as to which day should be observed. One day is not more holy than another. It is important that it should, on an average, be one day in seven. France at one time tried the experiment of observing one day in ten as a Sabbath, but it was not a success, and they fell back again upon the Biblical regulation. The Hebrews have for ages regarded Saturday as their Sabbath. The early Christians began to worship on Sunday, because it was the day of their Lord's resurrection. It was on Sunday that the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit occurred. For a while, Christians of Jewish descent observed two Sabbaths,—the Jewish, and the Christian. Later, only the one was observed. If the people of any country should agree to observe any other day of the week as a day of rest, recreation, and religious service, they would derive the full benefit of Sabbath observance.

Sabbath observance is an index of charac-

ter. You can tell quite accurately what a man is by the way he spends his Sabbaths. If any one is prosperous without Sabbath observance, it is almost a certain thing that his parents observed the Sabbath. His children are almost certain, however, to make a failure of life.

Many criminals will tell you that their career in crime began with Sabbath desecration. In a Sabbath-keeping community life and property are safer than in other communities. In a New England state there is a community in which there were six families that did not keep the Sabbath. In the course of time, five of these were broken up by divorce, and the husband of the sixth became a thief. Nine parents became drunkards, one committed suicide, and all became poor. Of forty or fifty descendents, half became drunkards, gamblers, and dissolute. Five were sent to state prison. One was killed in a fight, and some are in almshouses. One became a Christian, rescued from a dissolute life. In another community there lived five Sabbath-keeping families. All have done well. Most of them are church members. All are good citizens. One is a minister, and one a missionary to China. The neighbourhood is free from crime. All have accumu-

lated property, and the old homesteads are still in the hands of the descendents.

Thus we see that the institution of the Sabbath is not an arbitrary decree of God, but one fundamental to our prosperity and uplift. He desires the Sabbath also to be His great home day in this world; the day on which His children in a reverent and loving manner assemble in their Father's house and draw nigh unto Him, seeking a better acquaintanceship with Him, and declaring their devotion and loyalty to Him. This becomes the day in which He in an especial manner lays His hands of sacred benediction on their heads, and imparts unto them His peace. When this happens it is indeed a holy Sabbath day.

XII

WHY HAS THERE BEEN A CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST?

JESUS has been variantly understood. Many explanations have been presented to account for His life, as set forth in the New Testament. The people of His home community felt sure that no good thing could come out of Nazareth, and rejected Him on this general principle. When Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" they answered that some say He is Elijah, and others that He is a prophet. Herod concluded that He must be John the Baptist whom he beheaded.

Many of the Jewish leaders of His day regarded Him as a blasphemer and an impostor, because He made Himself equal with God. And for this reason they secured His crucifixion. Jesus did call Himself God's "only begotten Son." He said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also," and "I and the Father are one." When Jesus

asked His disciples whom *they* say that He is, Peter, speaking for the group, said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Those who accepted His leadership regarded Him as uniquely divine. They worshipped Him. Paul regarded Him as God. The primitive Christians met on the first day of the week, celebrating His resurrection, and worshipped Him.

The Ebionite Christians, in apostolic times, denied the deity of Jesus. Throughout the centuries these have had their successors. Present-day Unitarianism is the latest expression of this view.

In an effort to define the Trinity, some have held that God, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, takes these varying modes of manifesting His unitary being.

Paul of Samosata held that Christ was human, but had certain supernatural endowments given Him to live the life He did. William E. Channing, in the earlier part of the previous century, held substantially this view.

A great controversy arose, a few centuries after Christ, concerning the person of Jesus. There were those who said that He was highly exalted, but not quite equal with God; that God the Father created Him, and so He

became His Son. Origen refuted this view, saying that God never changes and hence must eternally have been Father.

There were those who held to the view that Jesus was of the same substance with the Father; others, that He was not of the same substance, but like substance. A great breach occurred in Christendom as a result of this controversy, and much persecution ensued. It was not merely a controversy among theologians, but laymen discussed this matter in their shops, and on the streets, much after the order of the discussion of political issues in heated campaigns of our time. The one side said that Jesus was "homoousion," same substance, the other side said He was "homœousion," like substance.

It has been argued by some that the narratives we have of Jesus, His miracles and teaching, are all myths. But this argument falls to pieces by its own incoherent and clumsy weight. The Gospels and Epistles are good historic documents. They tell who His parents and ancestors were, where and when He lived, the time and place of the performance of His miracles, the exact day of His crucifixion and resurrection. They give a continuous story, all properly and historically related. When you find such a record, it is

good history. Writers of myths are not likely to be so specific. Those who spread abroad the information about Jesus were persecuted. They persisted in relating the story, even if it resulted in their martyrdom. Paul would not have travelled and suffered as he did for a myth and falsehood. People will not suffer martyrdom for what they do not themselves believe. The same can be said to those who suggest that the accounts of Jesus are merely pious frauds. The sufferings of many martyrs of the primitive Church emphatically say, "No!" to that explanation.

The story of Jesus is so wonderful in its plot and purpose that it would have required a Christ to invent a Christ. The narrative of Jesus is absolutely unique in the world's literature.

It has been said that Jesus was not original. Certain sayings of His have been discovered, in slightly different form, in other oriental writings. But Max Müller himself says that he discovered these in such a mass of rot, that if he published everything associated with them he would be placed under arrest for dealing in matters shockingly vulgar.

It has been stated that it is a human trait to worship heroes. Emperors have been deified and worshipped. Mythical gods, an-

thropomorphic in their conception, have been devised and worshipped. They hold that the story of Jesus falls into this class. But where can you match the account of Jesus in the world's literature? There is a wide expanse between mythologic stories and the gospel narratives. There is no comparison between the two, so that the one should suggest the other.

What is the safest and most tenable conclusion concerning the person of Jesus? We believe it to be this: He is the Messiah foretold by the old Hebrew prophets. However, a greater Christ came than the most far-seeing one among them could discern. That is why He was rejected on the part of those who should have been the first to recognize Him. He did not fulfill the popular expectation; but He did infinitely more.

Believing that He was God in human form does not necessitate discarding the virgin birth. It is just what you would expect on the part of God revealing Himself in human flesh. It all helps to explain His career as Son of God, and Son of Man. The account of the astonishment of the learned men, when Jesus conversed with them at the temple, when He was twelve years of age, His baptism and temptation, all have their place in

such a story. That God the Creator should with great ease perform such miracles as Jesus did, is just what you would expect. That He should submit teachings that have never been equalled, and never outgrown, is exactly what we should anticipate. That He should make Himself an offering for human sin, through His passion and death, thus finding a way of reconciling men with God, is all in harmony with what a loving, divine Saviour would do. That He should furnish a remedy for sin is readily to be believed.

He claimed to be sinless. This has never been seriously disputed. The greatest miracle concerning Jesus is His sinless life. God in human form, of necessity, would be sinless.

The account of His resurrection and ascension makes the story complete.

We need not resort to metaphysics to account for Christ. We would likely go astray if we did; but not because there is anything unreasonable about His life and claims. He cannot be accounted for as other men.

We need not stumble at the doctrine of the Trinity. If God was eternally Father, it implies eternal Sonship. Created in the image of our heavenly Father, we are social beings. Hence God is a social Being. He loves; an unchanging God eternally has loved; and to

love, one must have an object of love. He has in Himself the requirements to gratify His social nature. If there had been a lone, unitary God, for eternities before any creation occurred, how lonely He would have been. But being a unitary tripersonality He could maintain a social fellowship with Himself, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is not tritheism, it is merely Biblical trinitarianism. You say that you could not conceive of such a being; but could you conceive of, or comprehend, an infinite unitary God? The fact that you cannot comprehend God does not disprove Him.

Subjecting the doctrine of the Trinity to a practical test, we find that it works. A doctrine has value to the extent of what it is capable of doing. It is a comfort to know God as Father. It is a joy to know Him as a human, divine Saviour. He comes so close to our humanity as such a Christ. Somehow, by faith, we realize that His blood cleanses from sin, and Christ is formed in us the hope of glory. Blood represents life. Jesus gives His life for us, and to us. His living self in us cleanses, and heals. Is this a mystery? Life throughout is a profound mystery. To believe in the Holy Spirit is a great comfort. It assures us that "Spirit with spirit can

meet." The Holy Spirit is the medium through which men can experience God in the soul.

Unbelief and denial do not remove a fact. In spite of all opposition, persecution, and denial, Christ is an increasing reality in the world. The predictions concerning the overthrow of His cause have never been verified. The enemies of Jesus might as well say with Julian the Apostate, "Thou Galilean hast conquered!" The only explanation of the person of Jesus that satisfactorily explains is that He was, and is, God in human form.

A learned French agnostic complained to Tallyrand that it is so difficult to launch a new religion. He told him that he devised an intelligent, rational religion to take the place of a worn-out superstition. But he said that people do not seem to appreciate it. Tallyrand assured him that it is the easiest thing in the world, if he goes about it in the right way. When he asked him what the right way was, he replied, "Teach your new religion, then get yourself crucified, and on the third day arise from the dead, and you will have no trouble getting people to believe in it."

The influence of the life of Jesus has been so greatly in advance of all others that have ever lived that we must readily concede that

it cannot be accounted for as can other lives. Jesus Himself is the great dynamic in Christianity that gives it its potency in the world, and has enabled it to tread the path of the conqueror in its march down the centuries.

It is said that Charles Lamb and some of his literary friends were amusing themselves by imagining how they would act if some of the great literary characters of the past should suddenly appear among them. Charles Lamb said, "If Shakespeare would appear among us we would all arise; but if Jesus should appear, we should all kneel."

That is the only becoming attitude before the Christ, after obtaining an honest and unprejudiced acquaintanceship with Him.

It was a divine, crucified, and resurrected Christ that the early Christians believed in, and proclaimed to others, and under the guidance and blessing of the Holy Spirit, they prevailed in marvellous fashion. The same Christ is capable of dealing successfully with all the vexing problems of the nineteenth century, and of saving from sin all who believe on Him.

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